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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 8705
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ FEB 8535
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 4773
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 5425
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 001221

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS AERIAL ERADICATION CONTINUES
NEAR ECUADOR BORDER; AGREES ON HUMAN RIGHTS OUTREACH

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood
Reason: 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

¶1. (C) Foreign Minister Maria Consuelo Araujo told the Ambassador on December 15 the GOC would continue its aerial eradication efforts near the border with Ecuador despite GOE protests. President Uribe was annoyed that the GOC's moratorium on spraying near the border had resulted in an additional 10,000 hectares sown, whose proceeds would finance FARC terrorism. The GOC would work with the GOE in a technical committee to try to depoliticize the issue. The Ambassador urged the GOC to continue high level outreach to human rights groups. End summary.

GOC Will Continue to Spray

¶2. (C) Araujo told the Ambassador on December 15 the GOC would stick to its position and continue aerial eradication in areas near the border with Ecuador. Aerial eradicators hoped to complete their work by year's end, weather permitting. She said the GOC's moratorium was a mistake; President Uribe was angered to see satellite photographs of the 10,000 hectares of coca that had been planted in Narino, Putumayo, and Meta departments since the moratorium took effect in January. The proceeds would finance FARC terrorism. Araujo said she had met with Canadian glyphosate expert and OAS study co-author Dr. Keith Solomon, who had persuaded her the spraying was safe. Araujo noted the GOC had manually eradicated over 43,000 hectares this year, but the work was difficult and very dangerous. The GOC would not put the lives of its eradicators at stake by trying to manually eradicate near the border.

¶3. (C) Araujo said the Palacio administration had continually looked for reasons to delay spraying after evidence of massive coca plantations was clear. (In a joint statement in Quito on December 7, 2005, the foreign ministers announced the GOC's temporary moratorium on spraying within 10km of the border, but did not establish a mechanism for resolving their differences over the safety of glyphosate.) Colombia had applied a unilateral moratorium for a year and delayed spraying at Palacio's request several times, but could hold off no longer. The GOC had informed Palacio prior to resuming spraying, and he was unhappy.

¶4. (C) Araujo said GOE Foreign Minister Francisco Carrion was exploiting the issue to try to impress the Ecuadorian left after President-elect Correa denied him a position in the next government. Araujo told the Ambassador that Correa also had sent a letter to the Andean Community (CAN) saying he did not support Carrion's pending nomination as the new CAN president.

Administrative Mechanism to Keep Talking

¶5. (C) Araujo reported the GOC had agreed to work with the GOE in a bilateral technical committee that would try to depoliticize the spray issue. Both sides would continue working on a formula to lower tensions.

Human Rights Outreach

¶6. (C) Ambassador Wood urged high level GOC officials to continue outreach to human rights activists, similar to President Uribe's 2004 meeting with human rights groups. That meeting had been difficult because the groups sharply criticized the GOC, but the outcome had helped improve GOC communications with the human rights community. Araujo reacted positively to the Ambassador's proposal and said she would discuss it with other GOC officials.
DRUCKER